

JANUARY 6 - 19, 2019

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BELMONT

Harbinger

Returning Home Another Way

“When [Mary and Joseph] had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.” (Luke 2:39)

REALLY? *Mary and Joseph have just had this amazing experience in Bethlehem with stars, angels and shepherds. Then after naming their newborn child “Jesus” as the angels told them to do, circumcising him on the 8th day and offering a sacrifice “required by the law,” old Simeon and Anna are beside themselves when they catch a glimpse of baby Jesus in the Temple as the familiar Jewish customs and rituals are carried out. Mary and Joseph just go back home after all that?*

Do all of us do the same thing today? *With the beginning of a New Year, do we just head back to our predictable schedules and routines as if nothing new and transformative has happened? Do we respond once again to Advent and Christmas as merely a season of familiar rituals and customs we pass through year after year which no longer touch us in a significant and lasting way?*

As I shared in my sermon December 30th pairing The Christmas Story with the book of Revelation, I hope this year will be different. *Nothing is said in the opening verses of Revelation 12 about shepherds and*

wise men, but the text describes a dragon leading a ferocious struggle “in heaven” with a woman who cries out in pain as she gives birth. Suddenly the vicious dragon crouches hungrily in front of the woman waiting to devour her child when at the last instant as soon as the child is born, the child is swept away to safety and the woman flees into the desert. From the perspective of Revelation, everything has changed ... “if only we can see it.”

Revelation gives The Christmas Story cosmic significance. *Using a dragon “in heaven” with a woman in labor, a picture is painted of the classic battle between good and evil to illustrate how the ultimate fate of all evil and darkness (the dragon!) is doomed with the birth and survival of the woman’s child. And while I do not know the dragons so many of us battle every day – inconsolable grief, hurts from the past, broken promises, broken hearts, broken dreams – I have come to see through my own personal experience this past year a new and deeper awareness of what the great miracle of Christmas is all about.*

(Continued on page 2)

Upcoming Events

- **January 6. 9:30:** Sunday School resumes
- **January 6, 5:00-** Middle School Youth resumes
- **January 6, 6:00** Youth Supper resumes
- **January 6, 6:30-** High School youth resumes
- **January 9. 5:00- 6:00:** **NEW TIME-** Kids Central resumes
- **January 9: 5:30 6:30** Family Night Supper resumes
- **January 9, 7:30** High School Bible Study resumes
- **January 27, 5:00-** The Marriage Course begins
- **February 1-2:** Youth 180 Weekend
- **February 16-** Young at Hearts trip to Narrowway Productions- see pg 4



(Continued from page 1)

Christ is born! God is “with us!” We are never alone! And the dragons, whatever and whoever they are, will not ultimately consume us. In fact, our Savior in time will defeat every one (!) of our dragons! Never to forget this great miracle of Christmas is my only resolution as we begin 2019 together. In fact, may we join the wise men whose story will be our focus on Epiphany (January 6) when Matthew tells us, “they returned [home] by another way.” (2:12)

Happy New Year!

Sam

Go Mobile!

Do you know that you can look up the contact information of our members on our mobile app?

Do you know that you can pay your pledge, or register and pay for any church event or program on our mobile app?



First, set up your Access ACS account, if you haven't already done so:

1. Set up Access ACS by [clicking here](#)
2. **Sign in screen-** Click as indicated after “Need a login? Click here”
3. **Account Sign in screen:** Complete boxes as indicated. An email with your log-in information will be sent to you. Follow the instructions.

A screenshot of the "Sign In" screen for Access ACS. It includes fields for "E-mail Address or User Name" and "Password", a "Remember my Username" checkbox, and a "Sign In" button. Below the fields is a link for "Forgot your password or user name?". At the bottom, there is a "Need a login? Click here" link and a "Go Mobile" button.A screenshot of the "Account Sign Up" screen for Access ACS. It includes a "Find Me" button and a note: "Don't have a user name and password? Enter your information and click Find Me. An e-mail containing your login information will be sent to you shortly." Below this are fields for "E-mail Address", "First Name", "Last Name", and "Suffix", and a "Find Me" button.

Next, download Church Life (the mobile app for Access ACS) and set up the app

1. Return to the Access ACS screen by [clicking here](#).
2. Click on “Go Mobile” and download the Church Life app as indicated for Android or iPhone.
3. Log-In with the same username and password as with Access ACS. There are tutorial videos on this page.

A screenshot of the "Sign In" screen for the Church Life mobile app. It includes fields for "E-mail Address or User Name" and "Password", a "Remember my Username" checkbox, and a "Sign In" button. Below the fields is a link for "Forgot your password or user name?". At the bottom, there is a "Need a login? Click here" link and a "Go Mobile" button.

The Alpha Marriage Course

New Start Date: January 27

The Marriage Course

A strong, loving and life-long relationship doesn't happen by chance.

It takes effort and dedication to keep the romance alive.

The Marriage Course is for couples who want to invest in their relationship, no matter how long you've been married, or if your marriage is strong or struggling.

How the Marriage Course Works

You share a candle lit dinner for two, listen to practical talks, discuss specific topics and grow in understanding of each other. There is no group work and you will not be asked to share with anyone other than your partner. Topics include building a strong foundation, communication, resolving conflict, forgiveness, family past and present, nurturing intimacy and love in action. The course is limited to 10 couples. Childcare can be provided upon request.

Details

When: Sunday, January 27- March 17; except February 3

Time: 5:00- 7:00

Cost: \$65.00 per couple

Facilitators: Revs. Sam Warner and Daria Ragan

[Click here for more information and to register](#) or contact Daria Ragan, dragan@fpc-belmont.org

*Register soon-
only 9 tables left!*



Upcoming Events - Children & Youth

CHILDREN

NEW SCHEDULE FOR KIDS CENTRAL RESUMES ON JANUARY 9

- Time: Kids Central is from 5:00- 6:00 pm
- We hope that the later time will enable more adults to volunteer. We need many adult volunteers each week
- Please contact Robin if you can commit to 1 hour per week or come on a rotating basis: rrussell@fpc-belmont.org



FAMILY SUNDAY SCHOOL RESUMES JANUARY 6 AT 9:30

- January 6: Epiphany Party
- January 13: Solomon's Temple
- January 20: Solomon's Temple

YOUTH

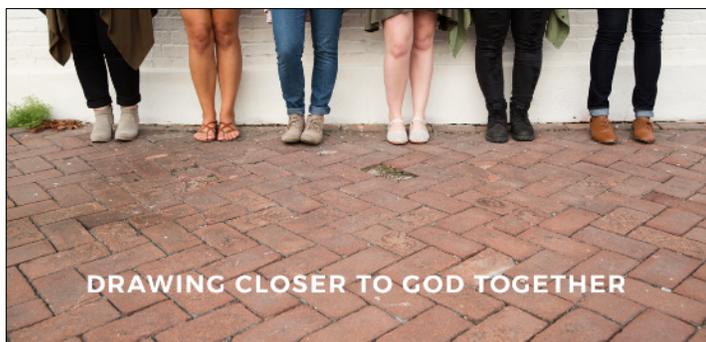
January 6: Youth Resumes

Both groups will have a Post-Christmas Ugly Christmas Sweater White Elephant- Gift exchange. Did you receive a gift you really didn't like or possibly will not EVER use? Bring it! Or if you were one of the lucky ones who loved all your gifts, just bring a \$5 or less gift to exchange. AND if you have a Christmas Sweater or shirt...WEAR IT! Let's exchange gifts and stories of our Christmas and share the Love of Christ with each other!

January 9: High School Bible Study resumes

January 13: Prayer Stations

180 Weekend: February 1- 2 Cost: \$30 per person due no later than January 27. [Click here to register](#)



Moms Connect

Moms Connect is a small group of Moms of infants through grandchildren who encourage and support each other as Christian moms. We take time to share, laugh, and sometimes shed a tear over real mom moments and embrace the chaos of life together. We use [Thrive Moms](#) devotional study to awaken our hearts, spirits and homes to love fully in the grace of Jesus. **We meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month and resume on January 9.** We invite all moms to join us! The group is led by class members and Rev. Daria Ragan. Questions? Contact Emily Moore ecsunc@yahoo.com.

SUMMER MISSION TRIPS

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT INFO

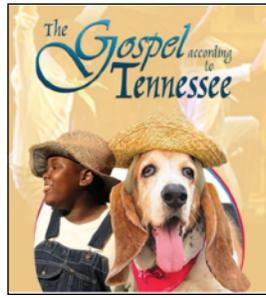
Middle School CROSS

- July 14-19
- **Cost: \$200 per person: you can make payments. Total must be paid no later than June 19.**
- There are 14 spots available
- We need 5 Adults to chaperone.
- If you are interested, please register ASAP. [Click here to register and pay](#)

High School- Prince George, VA

- July 14-20
- **Cost: \$450 per person. You can make payments. Total must be paid no later than June 19**
- There are 20 spots available
- We need 4 adults to chaperone
- If you are interested, please register ASAP. [Click here to register and pay.](#)
- Type of work: building wheelchair ramps, weatherizing homes, reconstructing sagging porches, interior and exterior carpentry, other home repair projects.

Our out-of-the-country mission trip is coming in the summer of 2020. Students 9th-12th grade who have attended CROSS and/or previous High School Mission Trips will have first priority.



Young at Hearts

The Young at Hearts are making a return visit to NarroWay Productions in Fort Mill, SC, following a popular trip there last year – come and go with us on **Saturday, February 16th!** At NarroWay we'll be seeing *The Gospel According to Tennessee*; and, in the spirit of the performance, we will be served a Noontime traditional “Home Cookin’” meal of Southern Fried Chicken, Macaroni and Cheese, Pinto Beans, Cornbread, Country-Style ChowChow, Blackberry Cobbler and Sweet Iced Tea -- followed by a “Heart of the South” performance of *The Gospel According to Tennessee*. The play is billed as a fast-paced, fun story of a true family; we'll sing along with some old Southern classics and watch for gospel truths. Plans are to leave from the Church Saturday morning at 11:15. The cost of this trip (the meal, the play, the transportation) is \$20 per person. See Leslie McLeod or Beth Geddis to make your reservation, or contact Beth at 704-825-4707, bgeddis@carolina.rr.com.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

General Fund

2018 Budgeted Offerings	\$800,553
• Pledged	\$469,344
• Non-pledged	\$331,209
Gifts Received (12/23)	\$37,420
Needed weekly to meet budget	\$15,395
Gifts Received Month-To-Date	\$111,751
Needed monthly to meet budget	\$66,713
Gifts Received Year-To-Date	\$661,404
• includes prepaid for 2018	\$49,856
• prepaid for 2019	\$25,650

Special Designated Offerings

Nickel-a-Meal	
• Month-To-Date	\$25
• Year- to- date	\$4,361
Souper Bowl BCO (YTD)	\$486
One Great Hour (YTD)	\$1333
Youth Mission Trip (YTD)	\$408
College/Young Adult Mission Trip	
• Year-To-Date	\$550
Hurricane Relief	
• Year-to-Date	\$4,554
Financial Peace University (YTD)	\$735
Columbarium (YTD)	\$1,075
Christmas Joy Offering	\$1035
Kid Central Mission Project	\$513
Feed the Children	\$2773

Capital Fund

Gifts Received 2018 Year-To-Date	\$4,475
Total Gifts Received 2007-2018	\$6,464,724

January Birthdays

1	Charity Chapman	13	Jon Wilson	22	Michael Robinson
	Emily Sherlock	14	Betsy Haughton	23	Meg Denham
	Chris VanderMeer	16	Mary Austin		Aaron DeVinney
2	Susie Bradley		Rick Ballew		Donna Finley
	Melissa Mullinix	17	Frank Elmore	24	Allison Baird
3	John Carstarphen		Anna Claire Rhyne		David Hall
4	Jann Cloninger		Zachary Watson		Tom McMeeken
	Mary Sigman	18	Adam Cloninger		Sean Murphy
5	Charlotte Gott		Chris Owen		Mack Watson
	Vann Noblett	18	Teresa Stump	25	Martin Armstrong
	Davis Sudderth	19	Charles Decker		Tom Beall
6	Ange Lefler		Kathryn Hamrick	26	Richard Murawa
8	Mary Benton		Wes Knowles		Elizabeth Smithers
	Kristin Henriksen		Alice Rhyne		Elena Toler
	Grace Keel		Daniel Rhyne	27	Neil Roche
	Brett Toler	20	Linda Locke		Emily Wilson
9	Maurice Brown		Augusta Smith	28	Clara Blalock
10	Bruce Coffey	21	Sean Burns		Jacob Noblett
	Laura Hall		Karen Coffey	29	Rebecca Stowe
	Shelley Pruitt		Ben Hollins		Al Wall
11	Kevin Pressley		Rob Modlin		Jean Wilson
	Hampton Rhoton	22	Zach Harris	30	Michelle Leonhardt
12	Ernestine Knowles		Jeff Haughton	31	Abigail Lefler
	Brook Knutsen		Lindsey Huckabee		Mark Paschall
13	David Barnhardt		Christmas Moose		Lindsay Rhyne

